



# Five Year Strategic Plan



# Introduction

Agricultural education is an integral aspect of the success of the Missouri agriculture, food, and natural resources industry. Investment in this area of education is unique and is meant to:

- grow wise and informed consumers,
- assist with workforce development,
- meet the needs of traditional and non-traditional agricultural education students, and
- help students develop practical and leadership skills.

The ‘Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020’ strategic plan was a valuable resource to lead the industry for over 20 years. As that plan expired, there was a need to evaluate and update the guiding document. This plan serves as a guide for agricultural education from 2024-2029. Due to the rapid change and growth in technology, agriculture, and education, a shorter plan is being implemented, as compared to previous plans to meet evolving societal demands.

Representatives from education (instructors, administrators, and students), government agencies, industry, and other key stakeholders were brought together in a multi-stage initiative to uncover the key issues facing agricultural education in Missouri and determine the vision to lead agricultural education into the future. Seeking input from all voices was a driving force behind the development of the plan, thus, creating a resource for all connected to education and agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR) in the state.

The result of the tiered data collection approach led to the results of the key priorities and defining themes listed in this plan. The strategic plan was developed in a way to be tangible and applicable to all stakeholders. Any stakeholder or group can take the key priorities and defining themes of the plan and apply them to their individual work. Thus, leading to the industry as a whole driving towards the same goal of impactful agricultural education for all levels and experiences. This approach will ensure a bright future for the agriculture, food, and natural resources industry in Missouri.



# Key Priorities + Defining Themes

The key priorities for this strategic plan were identified through a multi-stage initiative, which included a discovery session, a survey of stakeholders, focus groups made up of stakeholder representatives, and a task force. Through this process, four key priorities were identified:

- A. Comprehensive Reach of Agricultural Education Programs**
- B. Quality Curriculum and Resources**
- C. Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Literacy**
- D. Quality Instructors and Instruction**

In addition to the key priorities, defining themes were outlined for each priority. These guiding ideas should be viewed and executed through the lens of the Missouri Agricultural Education Vision and Mission statements.

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## Missouri Agricultural Education Vision

Agricultural education envisions a world where all people value and understand the vital role of agriculture and natural resources in advancing personal and global well-being.

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## Missouri Agricultural Education Mission

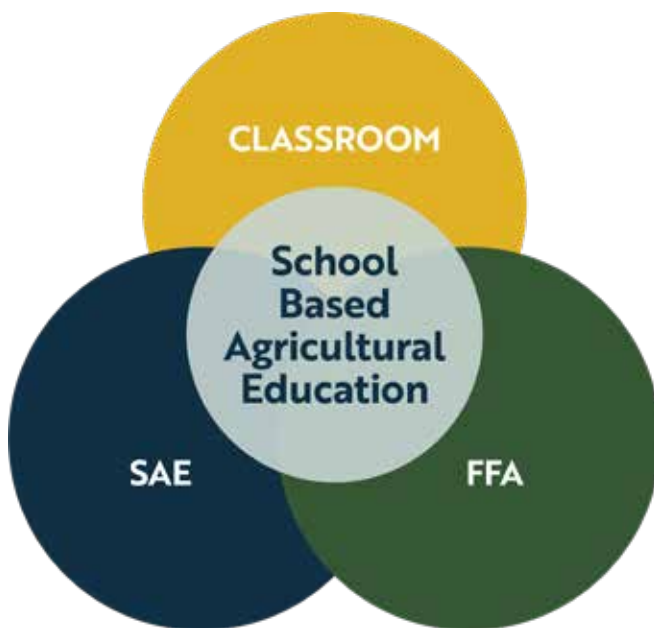
Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems.



## Priority A:

# Comprehensive Reach of Agricultural Education Programs

Agricultural education should strive to be a comprehensive school-based agricultural education program for kindergarten through adult learners. The education model should include a focus on equitably balancing all parts of the school-based agricultural education model (experiential learning experiences, classroom, and leadership development) and incorporating a community-based model.



## Defining Themes

1. All students, from kindergarten to adults, will have access to agricultural education in Missouri.
  - ◇ The focus will be placed on programs where state standards can be incorporated into the curriculum. Elementary programs can lean on a 'ready to use' curriculum developed through groups like Ag Ed on the Move and Ag in the Classroom.
  - ◇ All levels should focus on building partnerships with other disciplines and administrators to include agriculture topics in other courses and/or allow agriculture courses to fill core education requirements, especially at the secondary and post-secondary levels.
2. Agricultural education systems at the secondary level should have an equitable emphasis on all three pieces of the school-based agricultural education program. State staff should assist with emphasizing the need for balance without taking autonomy away from instructors.





## Priority B:

# Quality Curriculum and Resources

The success of all agricultural education hinges, in part, on quality curriculum and access to appropriate resources. Curriculum should be industry-relevant and focused on career readiness. Instructors should have the support and information at their disposal to acquire and use resources appropriate for the experiential nature of the agricultural industry.

## Defining Themes

1. All levels of education (kindergarten through adult) will have access to a high-quality and affordable agriculture curriculum that meets all appropriate state standards. The curriculum should be developed in cooperation with instructors, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and industry professionals; and evaluated for appropriate updates every five years.
2. Continued emphasis on accessible resources and supplies should be available to all instructors. These resources should include:
  - ◇ Directory of industry contacts and connections for technical advice for instructors to reference
  - ◇ Enhanced availability and affordability of equipment to use in the classroom, including a list of suppliers for educational resources in Missouri
  - ◇ A defined list of funding and grant opportunities available to instructors, specifically at the secondary level, to help provide increased access to funds for resources for students
3. Increased focus on programming in secondary programs to ensure student readiness for post-graduation – whether their program of choice is agriculture or non-agriculture.
  - ◇ Develop stronger articulation program relationships between secondary and post-secondary programs
  - ◇ Develop stronger career readiness programming in secondary programs

# Priority C:

## Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Literacy

There is a clear need to increase AFNR literacy from kindergarten to adulthood. This is a vast responsibility that should be addressed by all stakeholders of agricultural education. The focus on literacy will inform consumers, tell the story of agriculture, and connect agriculture with other disciplines in the education system.

### Defining Themes

1. The idea of agriculture literacy is simple, yet the ability to define it is challenging. Agricultural education must concisely define AFNR literacy, with the involvement of industry partners and stakeholders.
2. Once AFNR literacy is defined, a process must be created to establish an agricultural knowledge baseline for key groups.
3. The key groups to address when creating and deploying literacy efforts include:
  - ◇ School personnel
  - ◇ Elementary (K-6) students
  - ◇ Middle School (7-8) students
  - ◇ High School (9-12) students
  - ◇ Post-secondary stakeholders
  - ◇ Local community members
  - ◇ Agriculture, food, and natural resources industry members
  - ◇ Local and state leadership and policy decision-makers



# Priority D:

## Quality Instructors and Instruction

Sustaining a successful agricultural education program requires recruiting, developing, supporting, and retaining dynamic instructors who deliver quality instruction to students of all ages, abilities, and experiences.

### Defining Themes

#### 1. Recruitment

- ◇ Identify ways to provide early exposure to agricultural education-specific work experience
- ◇ Create learning and leadership opportunities for future agricultural education instructors in each district

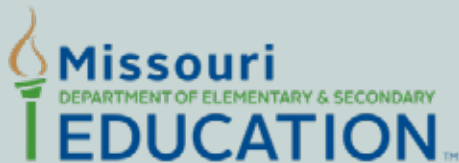
#### 2. Development

- ◇ Curate a list of subject matter experts (SMEs) and guidelines for quality instruction for each topic area in agricultural education, specifically at the secondary level
- ◇ Establish a culture of collaboration between instructors and industry professionals early
- ◇ Establish an expectation of professional development for all instructors

#### 3. Support and Retention

- ◇ Develop seamless and consistent curriculum updates and make supplies and resources accessible to all instructors
- ◇ Incorporate industry leaders in the classroom to provide curriculum guidance and support
- ◇ Continue facilitating experiences (i.e., professional development and mentorship programs) that foster a strong community atmosphere for instructors at all levels





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